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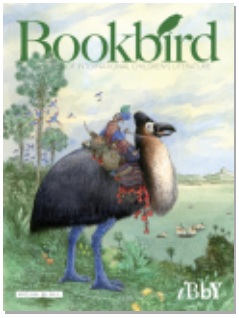
Cinderella Across Cultures: New Directions And Interdisciplinary Perspectives ed. by Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Gillian Lathey, and Monika Woźniak (review)



Shilpa Menon

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page) as the characteristic medium of Chinese twentieth-century mass communication; they served as propaganda tools during WWII, the ensuing civil war (1946-1949), and the Mao era, until they were replaced by mangas, imported from Japan, and have now become prized collector's items.

The second section presents the results of the quantitative analysis of 360 predominantly visual and 22 verbal narratives, most of them celebrating the heroic deeds of male Communist protagonists and their battles against the Japanese troops. The changing political, social, and cultural dynamics become apparent in the third section, which presents thematic analyses of the words and images of individual works: They all serve the mobilization against the Japanese or the legitimization of the Communist Party. In the fourth section, Chen uses interviews with older women from Zhejiang to contrast the local female view of events with the written accounts of the male-dominated discourse. The fifth section features the analysis of literary representations of the Chinese experience of WWII in thirty-one children's books published in the United States between 1937 and 2007. The size and make-up of this corpus—all titles were written by white authors, and no mention is made of Japanese crimes of war—are disappointing; the result is a rather short but telling chapter.

In her conclusion, Chen recognizes a common pattern in the representation of memories of the Sino-Japanese War, serving the changing political agendas of the interested parties. The need for representing individual experiences or for verbalizing personal traumas is not recognized. The oral accounts of female witnesses to this history, however, shift the focus from heroism, patriotism, and the blessing of the Communist Party to the suffering and the struggle for survival of Chinese victims.

The author convincingly argues that American media have failed to critically reflect this military conflict and that the collective memory of the war can be held accountable for many foreign policy actions of China. Concluding, however, that the texts document the effects of a hidden Anti-Japanese sentiment which had been repressed for decades does seem far-fetched. It remains to be seen whether the recent surge in youth literature on the Sino-Japanese war should be contributed to this latent consciousness or to a concerted political manipulation of public opinion. Chen's book is an interesting, much needed study opening up an important interdisciplinary field of research.

Lucia Obi
International Youth Library
Translated by Nikola von Merveldt

CINDERELLA ACROSS CULTURES: NEW DIRECTIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES.
Ed. by Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Gillian Lathey, and Monika Woźniak. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016. 421 pages. ISBN 978-0-8143-4155-1.

The foreword to *Cinderella across Cultures* observes that the contents "collectively provide new insights into contextualizing, retelling and reimag(in)ing Cinderella, and, though they wisely do not aim for a global survey, they do engage cultural traditions that, while remaining rooted in a Euro-American context, decenter the Basile-Perrault-Grimms-Disney genealogy" (Bacchilega xiii). The volume delivers quite well on this promise. A study of the Cinderella narrative no longer confined to folkloristics, it draws from fields as diverse as cultural and media studies, queer theory, translation studies, and museum studies. The essays are, indeed, exclusively devoted to Euro-American productions of the narrative, though versions of the story from Egypt, China, and India are mentioned. Collectively, they thoroughly trouble the reader's idea of Cinderella as a limpid-eyed heroine, revealing instead a multifaceted narrative that bears the marks of cultural flux and translation.

The volume is divided into three sections that respectively look at how texts "contextualize," "regender," and "visualize" Cinderella. In each of these, the author is relegated to just one among the various agents of transformation, and the reader, illustrator, and translator are all made visible. Since fairy tales tend to read as timeless narratives, the contributors aim to situate the text in its historical context and particular milieu, at the same time interpreting it as a potent site of resistance to these very contexts.

The first section looks at the shifting values and aesthetics that the protagonist embodies across time and region. Examining the versions of Perrault, Basile, Grimm, and other contemporaries, Ruth Bottigheimer traces the development of Cinderella as a "people's princess," identifying "[l]osses of autonomy and a stripping away of individuating characteristics" in the process (29). Taking up the aesthetic aspect of Cinderella, Kathryn Hoffmann studies the now-iconic glass slippers as a product of the baroque fetish for glass and mirrors in seventeenth-century Italy and France, putting to rest the long-standing debate about the possible misinterpretation of *vair* (fur) as *verre* (glass). Gillian Lathey examines the rather colorful oeuvre of Robert Samber, the first to translate Cinderella into English from Perrault's *Mother Goose Tales* in 1729, and his role in the infantilization of the text. What emerges in this section is Cinderella as a text of acculturation, promoting values as diverse as political acumen, social grace, and passive

obedience in response to varying contexts of production and reception.

The second section focuses on adaptations that utilize Cinderella as a site of feminist, homosexual, and queer resistance—subverting a text that had, over time, robbed its female protagonist of agency. Babette Cole's *Prince Cinders* is the object of analysis for Jennifer Orme, who uses Judith Halberstam's concept of queer failure to read the trickster figure of the fairy godmother in the text, arguing that she is the truly queer element in a text that only superficially reverses gender roles. Roxane Hughes's essay presents the sole instance of sustained engagement with non-Western versions of Cinderella, though it is through an American text: Napoli's *Bound*, which is set in Ming China in the sixteenth century and presents an empowered heroine.

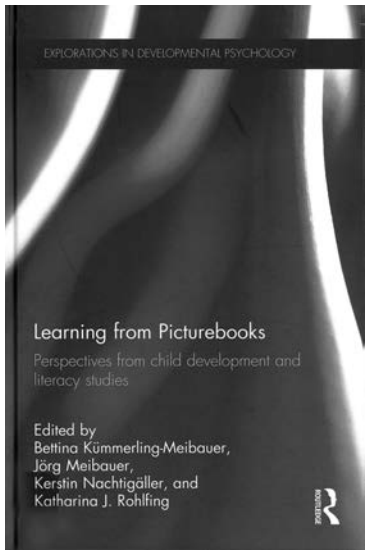
The final section looks at Cinderella in visual media, be they illustrations, posters, or film. Of note in this section is Xenia Mitrokhina's exploration of Cinderella as a working-class Everywoman in the Soviet Union's radical communist revisions of fairy and folk tales.

The editors make it amply clear in the introduction that the "new directions" taken imply a poststructural approach, delineating this collection from its well-known precursor, Alan Dundes' *Cinderella: A Casebook*. Whereas Dundes' 1982 collection responded to the dominant structural paradigm in folkloristics at the time, seeing deviant interpretations as "alternative readings," it is precisely these approaches that find a central place in *Cinderella across Cultures*. There is less of a drive to identify common archetypes and motifs: the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification of folk narratives is all but denounced as the focus is shifted to an exploration of how each version "speaks to a particular moment, context and audience" (de la Rochère et al. 16). Moreover, since folklore exists in the liminal space between adult and children's literature, many of the essays address moments of transmutation where Cinderella is recast, in turn, as a burlesque tale for the instruction of aristocratic youth by Perrault, as a retelling of a rustic folktale by the Grimm brothers, and as a didactic and sanitized children's fairy tale taught in English schools.

In this perspective, Cinderella is a floating signifier; indeed, the essays demonstrate that few elements of the narrative have remained stable over time. Nevertheless, one is still tempted to ask "what is Cinderella?" much as Eagleton asked "what is literature?" Is it simply a matter of consensus in a specific cultural context, or are there certain defining elements across all the transformations? Jack Zipes' concluding essay about "Cinderella's Legacy" indicates that the idea of the "triumph of the underdog" may be it. However, in his examination of the cinematic discourse around Cinderella, he warns that even this seemingly essential trope has begun to be perceived as outdated in its elements of passive virtue and melodramatic aesthetics. It is yet again time for a radical refashioning of Cinderella in response to shifting socio-cultural paradigms.

All the essays make meaningful contributions towards a coherent and well-rounded collection, but one criticism remains: in a volume that so overtly revels in difference, the modality of race is conspicuously absent. In the context of Disney's dubious efforts at racially inclusive fairy tales, and given that there is a good body of scholarship on the topic, it would have been pertinent to devote a section to the racial and intersectional dynamics of the Cinderella narrative, acknowledging the class-race-gender triad that has become so fundamental to critical scholarship today.

Shilpa Menon
M.A. (English Studies), Indian Institute of Technology Madras, India



LEARNING FROM PICTUREBOOKS: PERSPECTIVES FROM CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LITERACY STUDIES.
Ed. by Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, Jörg Meibauer, Kerstin Nachtigäller, and Katharina J. Rohlfing. Series: *Explorations in Developmental Psychology; 3*. London: Routledge, 2015. 231 pages.
ISBN: 978-0-415-72079-3

With chapter contributors coming from fields such as developmental psychology, optometry and vision science, early-years education, clinical linguistics, international children's literature, multimodal literacy, linguistics, philosophy, and preschool education—this scholarly work is a compendium of interdisciplinary approaches which looks into how children acquire language as well as develop cognitive, emotional, and emergent literacy skills through picturebooks. While it runs the risk of appearing like a hodge-podge of disconnected studies with such a wide variety of disciplines gathered together in one text, the editors have done a remarkable job of structuring each chapter in such a way that the core connecting thread of how children learn from picture books runs through this academic text that features empirical investigations conducted or reviewed extensively by the chapter contributors.

The book is divided into three major sections. Part One, "Symbol-